

MINUTES
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE WORK SESSION
August 5, 2019
City Hall Council Chambers

PRESENT: Mayor Stiehm. Council Members Steve King, Paul Fischer, Rebecca Waller, Jason Baskin, Joyce Poshusta (left at 6:34 p.m.), Laura Helle, Council Member-at-Large Jeff Austin

ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: City Administrator Craig Clark, Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert, Public Works Director Steven Lang, Parks and Recreation Director Kevin Nelson, Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace, Fire Chief Jim McCoy, Police Chief David McKichan, Library Director Julie Clinefelter and City Clerk Ann Kasel

ALSO PRESENT: Mark Nibaur, Nathan Annis, Joe Sunderman, Austin Daily Herald, Public

Mayor Stiehm opened the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Item No. 1 – Snow Removal Ordinance and Procedures

Public Works Director Steven Lang reviewed the City's current procedures for snow removal. He stated the current policy for plowing is if the snow fall is ½" to 2" the City applies sand and salt at the intersection and does not plow. If the snowfall is greater, then the City plows curb to curb and applies sand and salt. Mr. Lang stated the current cost to the City to plow for a major plowable event is approximately \$25,000. If the Council wants employees to plow additional times during lower snowfall amounts then it would come at an additional cost to the City. He also reviewed the application of salt and sand and how the allocation of that ratio would have additional cost to the City. The additional salt would also impact water quality of the local waterways. He stated if the Council would like the residential neighborhoods plowed more quickly than the City would need additional equipment and operators.

Council Member Helle stated she would hate to take action based on one high snowfall year.

Council Member-at-Large Austin stated the smaller snowfall events are making compaction in the residential areas.

Street Superintendent Joe Sunderman stated that people are on the roads much more than in past years and create much more compaction.

Council Member-at-Large Austin spoke in support of no parking on the streets to alleviate compaction and road width issues.

Mr. Lang also discussed the snow emergency parking declaration. Currently, the City Engineer would call a snow emergency if the forecast calls for accumulation greater than 6” of snow with wind. During the emergency downtown parking is restricted from 1:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. and the residential areas are to park with the calendar. He discussed options for an alternate side parking ordinance and reviewed the pros and cons of it to the City and the citizens of Austin. Mr. Lang proposed enacting alternate side parking from November 15th to March 15th. He stated it may be a challenge because in the older neighborhoods because of the single garages and smaller lots. Police Chief McKichan stated there would be extra costs in the beginning to ensure residential compliance. He also stated that the cost of a snow removal ticket may need to be reconsidered.

Council Member Baskin stated the change would greatly impact every resident that parks on City streets.

Council Member King spoke in favor of alternate side parking on the streets during the winter months to ensure emergency vehicles can navigate the streets.

Jim McCoy spoke in support of the alternate side parking ordinance to provide greater access for emergency vehicles.

Moved by Council Member King, seconded by Council Member Fischer, to direct staff to develop an alternate side parking ordinance for the winter months. Carried 6-1 with Council Member Baskin voting nay.

Item No. 2 – Rental Housing Update

Planning and Zoning Administrator Holly Wallace provided an update to the rental licensing program. She stated that 775 inspections so far in 2019. She stated that 43% of those homes passed the rental inspection with 57% of the homes failing the inspection. Homes that fail the inspection require a re-inspection which also has a fee of \$50. Ms. Wallace stated that the inspector is averaging 6-8 inspections daily. The NW quadrant will be completed in September of 2019 and then the department will work on the NE quadrant from there.

For Council information only; no additional action needed at this time.

Item No. 3 – Hormel Foundation Grant Rankings

Nathan Annis stated there has been curling at Packer Arena for 3 years and there are 20-25 people that curl each week. He stated he would like funding for additional equipment for additional players and youth players. He also would like equipment to condition the ice specifically for curling.

Austin Utilities General Manager Mark Nibaur requested funding to double the amount of education provided and obtain an electric vehicle.

The Council reviewed the 2020 Hormel Foundation Grant Requests and ranked them in the following order:

1	APD-Lenz	Police Department Drone	\$42,792
2	Public Works – Lang	Riverside Arena Roof Insulation	\$150,000
3	Library - Clinefelter	Delivering the Data: Hotspot Data Plan 2020	\$45,000
4	HRA – Medgaarden	TAR Targeted Area Redevelopment (2 year plan)	\$300,000
5	Public Works – Lang	Todd Park Trail Bridge Replacement	\$100,000
6	Nature Center – Education Programs		\$40,000
7	Park & Rec – Nelson	Curling Program	\$20,000
8	Plng & Zoning – Wallace	Sumner & Pacelli Neighborhood Revitalization	\$90,000
9	Park & Rec – Nelson	Todd Park Ball Diamond Scoreboard Replacement	\$40,486
10	Utilities – Lady	Energy Education in Schools	\$10,300
11	Utilities – Lady	Electric Car	\$20,000
12	Fire – McCoy	Fire Prevention & Education	\$5,000

Additional Request (No Rank Needed) Tom Dankert Quality of Life 2020 \$90,299

The item will be on the August 19, 2019 Council Agenda.

Item No. 4 – 2020 Budget Review

Director of Administrative Services Tom Dankert presented the proposed 2020 budget and tax levy. City staff prepared the budget based on Council’s plan for 2020 after a review with each department head’s current budget and new requests earlier in the year. Mr. Dankert stated the budget includes \$200,000 as an annual contribution to the Community Recreation Center and \$200,000 to start a housing initiative fund.

The certified local government aid for 2020 is \$8,488,423 which is an increase of about \$325,000 over 2019. Mr. Dankert stated he included a 4.03% tax levy increase which is \$277,000 resulting in a total levy of \$7,150,000. The City has until September 30th to certify the levy by resolution. The City won’t capture as much new growth this year due to the housing abatement program.

The Council discussed the proposed comp and class study and how that would impact the 2020 budget.

He noted that the Austin Port Authority asked for an increase in the levy from \$40,000 to \$60,000. Mr. Dankert stated \$50,000 was included for the Port in the 2020 budget.

Mr. Dankert noted some modifications to the agency allocations as follows:

- Human Rights Commission, increase from \$4,500 to \$6,500
- Seibel Center – allocation of \$5,000
- 4th of July – increased budget from \$6,000 to \$10,000
- Impact Austin (formerly Vision 2020) – allocation of \$5,000

The Welcome Center requested an increase from \$7,500 to \$8,000 which was not included in the 2020 budget.

The other agencies were kept at the same level.

The Council approved the proposed increased and requested the Welcome Center be allocated \$8,000 and Impact Austin be decreased to \$4,500.

Mr. Dankert stated no additional full-time employees were included for 2020. A second 20-hour per week Community Service officer has been added. The parking enforcement officer has been eliminated to help fund part of the position and the new CSO would be responsible for 10 hours a week of parking enforcement.

Also included is extra funding for the police department administrative assistant overlap because the current employee is expected to retire.

The 2020 budget did not include an additional \$50,000 for Fire Department paid on call salaries, Human Resources part time help and Park Maintenance at the Nature Center.

Chief McCoy spoke in support of additional funding for salaries when people are on call. He stated if additional part time staff are brought in then they would have more training and they are having a problem funding paid on call staff.

Council Member King requested Mr. Dankert work with Chief McCoy to see if the funding for firefighters can be worked in.

Mr. Dankert stated contingency for 2019 is proposed at \$100,000; down from the typical amount of \$150,000.

Mr. Dankert reviewed modifications from the departments' original funding requests. He compared the City's tax with other comparable cities stating Austin ranked 4th place out of 5 cities with the lowest taxes.

Mr. Dankert reviewed the capital outlay items. He stated the Council could cut items if they wished to fund other sources.

Mr. Dankert requested the Council e-mail him on any specific items they may have questions on.

The item will be placed on the August 19, 2019 Work Session Agenda for additional discussion.

Item No. 6 – Administrative Report

City Administrator Craig Clark noted different rates of taxes paid on a \$100,000 home.

Item No. 7 - Open Discussion

Council Member Baskin requested the Human Rights Commission provide an update prior to Welcoming Week.

Moved by Council Member-at-Large Austin, seconded by Council Member King, adjourning the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann M. Kasel
City Clerk